

April 24, 2000

APR 28 2000

Department of the Army
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers
Attn: Lower Snake River Study
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

RE: Lower Snake River Study

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the studies concerning the advisability of breaching the four Lower Snake River Dams. We applaud Corps' courage to stand by the work that was done even while public comment at your meetings has challenged the accuracy of the study.

We firmly oppose the removal of the four Snake River Dams under any conditions.

As you know, actions taken as a result of your studies will affect the entire region at several different levels including social, economic and others. From what I have read, your conclusions are properly validated by numerous other scientific studies. I am disturbed, however, by some media writers inappropriate and inaccurate characterization of the public meetings held in this regard. I don't think we need to choose sides and that the side with the most in attendance is the 'right' side.

The extensive public process was for the dissimulation of information and comments, not a popularity contest. I believe the Corps' study can be the foundation for our working together to find balanced solutions that meet the needs of people and the environment. How can we possibly ignore a few facts?

- We are now seeing more than 90% survival through each hydropower project, which includes the facility and the reservoir.

- Ten years ago, the best scientific information said that only 10 to 30 percent of the salmon smolts survived the trip past dams. Today, NMFS says that survival is as high as it was in the 1960s and 1970s - before the dams on the lower Snake River were built.


- Nearly four million tons of commodities are currently shipped by barge on the lower Snake River. An additional 120,000 railroad cars or 700,000 semi-trucks will be needed if barge traffic is eliminated, causing major impacts on transportation and air pollution.

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- Fish survival through the hydropower system has improved to the point where the NMFS has found that breaching alone, or increases in flow or spill regimes alone, cannot bring these fish runs back. These are "silver bullets" that will not get results.

Again, thank you for allowing us to comment on your study. We can save the salmon and keep the dams if we work together.

Regards,


Scott C. Hege, Executive Director
Port of The Dalles